



Congressman John Sarbanes



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Back to School

Fall 2016



Dear Friend,

At this time of year, sending our children back to school for a successful term is a top priority for most American families. Especially in this tough job market, a strong education remains one of the key enablers of financial success and a driver of long-term economic security.

In Maryland, we are fortunate to have one of the best education systems in the nation. And in Congress, I will fight to keep it that way by ensuring that our state receives its fair share of federal resources.

Below, I've included some information about educational opportunities for students and about Congressional efforts to keep college affordable. I hope you'll take a look, and that you'll find the information helpful as you continue to plan for your child's education.

I wish you and your family a safe and healthy start to this new school year and encourage you to contact my office in Towson at (410) 832-8890 if I can be of service to you.

K-12 Education

- **Improving the ESEA.** In December, Congress passed and the President signed into law a bill reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and replacing the widely-criticized No Child Left Behind Act. This bipartisan legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act, contains a number of reforms that will provide students with a high-quality, twenty-first century education. Not only does it avoid an overzealous focus on "teaching to the test," but it also includes a provision I authored in the No Child Left Inside Act that will bolster environmental education programs for students. I will continue to work with the Department of Education to ensure our schools have the guidance they need to successfully implement the new law, and I remain committed to ensuring that Maryland's schools, teachers and students have the resources to meet their educational goals.
- **High School Art Competition.** Each spring, the U.S. House of Representatives sponsors a nationwide high school art competition. Students from each Congressional District can enter their artwork for a chance to have it displayed in the U.S. Capitol for one year. Open to all high school students, the contest is an opportunity to recognize artistic talent from across the nation and spur student interest in the arts. For more information about the competition, please contact my office at (410) 832-8890.
- **U.S. Service Academies.** Each year, I am privileged to nominate qualified candidates from Maryland to the U.S. service academies, including the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. If you are interested in applying to one of these academies, visit <https://sarbanes.house.gov/services/students/military-academy-nominations>.

Higher Education

- **Keeping College Affordable.** As our children enter a workforce that increasingly demands a college degree, many working families continue to struggle with the surging costs of higher education. Congress is working with colleges and universities to find ways to combat the increasing cost of tuition. As part of this effort, colleges are now reporting to Congress on the causes of tuition increases and must provide students with fair and full information about their borrowing options when taking out and repaying student loans. As a national leader in strengthening student financial literacy, the State of Maryland is also implementing curriculum requirements to provide instruction on the subject for all students in grades 3-12.
- **Strengthening Financial Aid Programs.** Congress passed legislation to simplify and streamline the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process – the primary mechanism to access federal financial aid for education – into an easy-to-navigate, two-page form. Congress has also expanded opportunities for students to access financial literacy and support services. In addition, we are providing tuition assistance to students who commit to teaching in public schools in high-poverty communities or to teaching high-need subject areas. I remain committed to increasing the size, duration and year-round eligibility of Pell Grant awards, so that millions of eligible students can take advantage of need-based federal financial aid for college.
- **Supporting Our Servicemembers and Veterans.** Congress is honoring the service of our military families by enhancing the Montgomery GI Bill program so that it keeps up with the costs of a higher education. We have also established a scholarship program for the children and spouses of active-duty servicemembers and veterans.
- **Making Student Loan Repayment Affordable.** Many who are fortunate to earn a degree still grapple with student loan debt long after they graduate. This debt burden often forecloses many career options and delays major purchases like cars and homes, which in turn produces a drag on the national economy. To address this issue, I authored a law creating the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which forgives remaining student loan debt for those who have made loan payments for 10 years while employed full-time in public service. Those eligible for PSLF include teachers, first responders, health professionals, civil servants, public interest attorneys and many others in nonprofit jobs. For more information, visit: studentloans.gov/repay.

Additional Information

- Contact the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid division by visiting www.studentaid.ed.gov or by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- The nonprofit Institute for College Access and Success – Project on Student Debt provides supplementary material about PSLF: www.ibrinfo.org.
- The Federal Student Aid Ombudsman, 1-877-557-2575, can assist with the resolution of borrowers' repayment issues.
- The National Consumer Law Center's Student Loan Borrower Assistance is an additional resource to guide individuals through the repayment process: www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org.

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